THE SONG OF THE BLIND.

Dark—forever dark, I go
Through this world of want and woe,
Imploring thy sweet charity.
Stay, hurrying foot; O pity me!

No morning ray dispels my night;
I may not see the blessed light;
A dateless dark—a settled gloom,
A foretaste of the coming tomb.

No glory of a setting sun
Paints my heaven when day is done;
Morn, noon, or eve no solace bring;
Night brooding folds her sable wing.

For me no moon, for me no star
Send their greeting from afar;
I grope to find a friendly hand
To guide me through this weary land.

I lay me down in darksome night;
My dreams are of the heavenly light;
I wake to find that dreams bestow
My only comfort here below.

No more shall manhood's form divine,
Or woman's softer beauties shine
Childhood's grace, decrepit eld,
From my sightless eyes withheld.

The smile of joy, the tear of woe,
Alike to me may come and go;
The dear old faces! now they pass
Unmirrored o'er my darkened glass.

To help the weary in their strife;
To ease the burden of this life,
No gift from me, for while I live
Alas! I take, but can not give.

Dark—forever dark, I go
Through this world of want and woe,
Imploring thy sweet charity.
Stay, hurrying feet; O pity me!

—*Exchange.*

HER PUNISHMENT.

[Exchange.

"What! doubt the truth of the man to whom I have given my love! It were treason to the very name of love!"

"At least it would be wisdom."

"Such wisdom as I scorn. No, Hilda, say what you will, you cannot shake my faith in Ernest. He is as true as steel."

The speaker was a tall girl with a dark face, from which eyes of witchery looked out. She had lips which were now slightly compressed as she finished the sentence.

"I would not be so sure, if I were you," was the response from her companion, who stood on the path which led to the road from the country house behind them.

Juliet Harrington turned her head with a quick, imperious movement, as she exclaimed:

"Why would you not feel sure since I am sure? Do you think I would give my promise to a man who did not adore me?"

"But men may adore at one moment and be indifferent the next," returned Hilda, stopping to twist more closely about her head the blue, fluffy mass of wool which protected her from the cold.

"The man whom I love will not do so," was the quick reply.

Miss Hilda Penryth, who was four or five years older than the magnificent brunette beside her, looked at her curiously, in silence, for a time.

Hilda Penryth was small. One at first would have said she was plain, but one might discover that her face possessed a wonderful power of expression; there might be a concentrated spark in her eyes that would possess force in whatever way she chose.

After a pause she said, quietly:

"I should imagine it might be easy for a man to be faithful to a creature like you. Is Mr. Holbrook coming to-day?"

"Yes."

"I think you make a great mistake in loving any man so much. Ah! what is that!"

The exclamation was made by the sound of something rushing through the shrubbery of evergreens at the right of where the two girls were standing.

Juliet shrieked a little, and sank to one side, and at the same moment a huge, dark-colored dog, dashed out from the hedge. His head was down, his mouth scattered foam, his eyes emitted sparks.

While Juliet, who had sprang away, had gone directly in the path of the infuriated animal, Miss Penryth, who had remained where she had been standing, was several yards from him.

The brute was going on with that unswerving leap which is so terrible to see, and he had passed Miss Penryth, who had not moved, toward Juliet, who seemed petrified with terror in the spot where she stood.

Miss Penryth could not stand quietly. There was a dash of physical courage in her which enabled her to spring forward, slipping off the crimson shawl from her shoulders as she did so, and then flaunting it full in the face of the wild-eyed animal, while Juliet sank down to the grown in heap and her white face was like the face of the dead, save for the protruding eyes of horror.

The dog, baffled for a moment, and uncertain, now turned toward Hilda Penryth. Useless for her to try to run. She clasped her hand and stood still.

Only for a breath of time, however. The sound of a footstep on the frozen gravel might have been heard by the girls, if they could have heard anything.

The footstep was that of some one running furiously. The figure of a man appeared. He had a pistol in his hand, and though there was a terrible fear in his mind that he might not aim correctly, he could not hesitate.

The flash, the report of the pistol, and the dog rolled over on his side with a moan, his teeth set fast in the skirt of Miss Penryth's dress.

It was to Juliet's side that the man sprang, hardly glancing at Miss Penryth, who coolly drew a penknife from her pocket, and stooping, carefully cut her dress away from the grip of the dying dog's teeth.

"That, I suppose, is Mr. Holbrook, she said to herself, looking at him attentively, as he bent on one knee over Juliet, whose sense had come back to her sufficiently for her to recognize her lover. "Yes, evidently he loves her. I wish she had not been so sure of him. It is such a temptation to prove her words false."

That was what the quiet-looking girl was thinking, as she again wrapped her shawl about her and walked slowly down the path.

In a few moments she heard her name called and pausing and looking back she saw the two coming toward her.

When they were a little nearer the man hurried forward and raising his hat said in a tone which was not quite steady:

"I do not know what you will think of us. I confess I was for the moment capable only of thinking of Miss Harrington. You will forgive that, I know. I cannot tell you how grateful I am to you."

"Indeed! why?" asked Hilda.

Although her words were abrupt the voice in which she spoke them was far from being so. There was a silky softness in it that Juliet had never heard before and which made her look quickly at the girl who had spoken, while a pain that was almost like a knife thrust suddenly wen tthrough her heart.

Hilda only glanced at Ernst Holbrook as she replied, and he had not given any thought to her, so profoundly was he absorbed in the danger which had so recently threatened the woman he loved.

When the two walked away again Miss Penryth turned into another path and walked rapidly toward the house.

When she reached her own room she sat down before the fire without removing her wraps. Looking into the burning coals with an intent gaze her face gradually changed.

"What do I owe to any man?" she asked at length, in a half whisper. "And as for Juliet, she is a baby in her feelings and will not suffer much."

At this moment some one knocked. She opened the door and Juliet stood there.

"May I come in?" asked the girl.

"I was just coming to discover if you were still frightened," responded Hilda.

"Don't rpeak of it" cried the other, with a shudder. "Think of what might have been if Ernst had not come! He says he admires you for your presence of mind although you are——But how I do chatter!" catching herself up with a blush. "He admires you so much."

"Even though I am so plain," calmly remarked Miss Penryth.

"But I did not mean to tell you that."

Hilda laughed, not bitterly to the ear in the least.

"Oh! I don't mind it all," she said, lightly. "I am plain, and I know other people know it."

In her heart the woman was saying:

"He shall pay for those words"

In the days that follow it would have been a curious study for one not vitally interested to have watched the change in Ernst Holbrook's manner toward Miss Penryth.

This attention was not marked: on the contrary, it almost seemed as if he were desirous of concealing even from his own consciousness the attraction which she held for him, and which every day he felt more powerfully.

Had he ever thought her face unprepossessing? When Juliet reminded him, one day, that he had said Miss Penryth was plain, he uttered an exclamation of astonishment, but he made no other reply. His betrothed, in a troubled tone, persisted in dwelling upon the subject.

"I suppose she must be fascinating, is she not?" she asked, wistfully.

The man's face wore a strange smile. He averted his eyes as he remarked, in a harsh voice:

"Fascinating! Yes, I think that must be the word by which to describe your friend, and she is your friend, is she not?" asking the question suddenly.

Juliet trembled a little and turned pale. She seemed to struggle a moment with herself, ond then she said, faintly:

"Oh, yes, of course she is my friend."

The winter days ran on. Miss Penryth had come to stay with her friend until the spring.

How did it happen that Ernst Holbrook could now sometimes come to the house, and remain, perhaps, for a couple of hours before Juliet would come into the room? He always scrupulously called for her the moment he came, but he appeared to forget that she did not come.

On one of those days when Juliet had not come, he had been strolling about the room in silence. Though he did not speak his eyes returned again and again to the woman who sat on the sofa. There was a reckless resolve in his face, and that look was mingled with something which could not be interpreted, which any woman might do well to fear even though she could not understand it.

He came and leaned over the girl. His voice vibrated, as he said:

"Miss Penryth!"

She looked; a light, bewildering and enthralling was in her eyes, and diffused in a lovely glow over the hitherto unlovely face.

"What would you say to me if I were to tell you I love you?" he asked quickly.

"Need I answer?" she asked softly.

"Yes, answer!" imperatively.

"Then I should say that I love you," was the low-spoken reply.

Something in the man's face made Hilda Penryth suddenly rise to her feet while her face grew pallid and the glow died from her eyes.

"You are mocking me!" she cried, in a smothered voice. "You do not really love me!"

"I'm thinking of a man—a boy almost—my dearest friend, whom I loved more than brothers usually love," returned Ernst in a stern voice. "You may recall Bertie Faulkner. Ah, I see you do. You killed him that you might be amused. Perhaps it was not manly in me to resolve to avenge him in some slight degree. But I did not think of so base an action until I fancied you wished to play with me. I do not love you, Miss Penryth, but I can understand how a man might be infatuated with you. It was beneath me to stoop to such a course as this. I don't ask you to forgive me."

"No, no," said Hilda, her voice husky and strange. "Do not ask that, for I never could do so."

"And why?"

"Because I love you. At last I love. Do not speak to me. I tell you that for the first time in my life I love. I am sufficiently punished for trying my power."

She stood looking at him for an instant, then turned and hurried from the room.

Ernst gazed blankly at the door which had closed behind her. He had not known how much he could despise himself, and there was a curious pulsation in his heart which made him unwilling to see Juliet.

It was a week before he returned to the house. When Juliet informed him of Miss Penryth's departure, he would not allow himself to manifest any interest. The few weeks that had passed had formed an episode in his life which he could not wish to remember.

THE FIRST VISITOR.

[*For The Arkansaw Traveler.*]

BY MRS. JULE W. THOMPSON.

Blessed is the woman who knows nothing of the "breaking up" of an old home, parting with articles of no intrinsic value, yet dear to her from association, tearing loose the heartstrings that have for years been twining themselves around everything about the 'old place," and removing to a distant country, there to begin life over again. We were passing through the ordeal of this trying experience. After a morning of arduous labor, unpacking the pictures and books, which had been left for the very last, hanging the former, arranging the latter upon their shelves, we sat down to dinner congratulating ourselves that the house had assumed something of a homelike appearance.

"Now, you must rest from your labors," said my husband, arising from the table. "There are those books we bought in Little Rock, you will have a quiet afternoon for reading as I must go to D——," which was the town nearest to our new home.

Seated in my low rocking chair, near a glowing fire, for it was a damp, dark December day, enjoying the rest, comfort, and Marion Harland's "Empty Heart," when a scraping of feet on the front porch arrested my attention. Glancing through the window I saw a saddled horse hitched near the gate. I arose and opened my room door to confront in the hall a woman below the medium height. I noticed that her "royal purple" dress did not make connection with the high tops of her heavy shoes as she came towards me with extended hand, saying, "I am widow Williamson."

I shook hands with her, and invited her to walk in and be seated. "In a minute—as soon as I git off my things," she replied, stopping midway the room and untying the strings of a calico sunbonnet, which she threw upon the sofa, she proceeded to divest herself of a large shawl, whose strips represented the colors of the rainbow, in variety, at least.

"I thought, perhaps, you would like to warm before removing your wraps," I stammered, arresting the shawl in its flight across the room.

"There! just you let 'em be! Don't trouble to lay 'em away," she protested.

I assured her it was no trouble, and as she accepted the proffered chair, I saw her face clearly. She had small, bright black eyes, and a heavy suit of jet black hair, thinly sprinkled with gray, was combed away from her swarthy face and wound into a long, pointed coil, high upon the back of her head.

"As soon as I heerd that some new comers had bought old man Sullivan's place, I said to my Sarah Sigourney Sunflower Siddons, 'I'm a gwine rite over ther to see 'em!' I know what 'tis to leave the old homestead, and come to this God-forsaken Arkansaw, a stranger, and go days upon days without seeing a new face. But, la! child, it ain't nothing now to what it was thirty years ago, when we fust come here. Old Brother Sullivan's folks and our'n come together from Georgia, and him and my old man homsteaded j'ining ferms. They helped one another cut down trees and build log cabins rite in the woods, and 'cepting us two ther wasn't another family in ten miles, and what 'pon yearth Brother Sullivan turned fool and left here for, after he'd put up this here fine house, and got good out-houses built, and everything fixed to live comfortable—I don't know. While she talked her little black eyes were taking an inventory of everything in the room.

"He's following up his sons what's gone to Texas," she continued, "and he'll never be no more 'count in this world—mark my word! Its just like digging up an old apple tree and planting it in a new orchard by side er these here long, limber switches the agents bring 'round. They'll grow, but the o'd tree won't. Its done with sweet, white blossoms and red, ripe fruit. It pines and withers and dies. As I told my Daniel Doolittle Douglas Donnalson the last time he was ter my house, he and all the rest can go where they please, but I'm not going noseying round after 'em—that's certain!"

In this strain the old lady continued for two mortal hours, wile I sat, wide-eyed with wonder, intensely amused, uttering an exclamation during her pauses for breath, and "Ah?" or "Indeed!" was as much as I could say before the "talking machine" was wound up and in operation again. Every few moments she referred to one of her children, always prefixing "My" to the medley of names gathered from poets, statesmen, divines, and—various other sources.

When finally she arose, declaring she must "git home," my curiosity burst the bounds of control.

"How many children have you, Mrs. Williamson?" I asked.

"Sixteen."

"I am very forcibly struck with the names of those you have mentioned." I went on hurriedly "Did you provide them all"——notwithstanding my haste my sentence was cut short.

"That I did, child, and you are not the fust one that's been struck with my children's names. I've had folks to even write 'em down, and if you've paper and pencil handy you can do the same if you're amind to, as I tell 'em over," and she laughed heartily at my eager acceptance of her proposal.

"The fust two was born in Georgia. They all pair off as nice as ever you saw—four boys, then four gals, then four gals, then four more boys, and four more gals."

"You do not intend to say that"—I cried in utter astonishment.

"God bless you, no!" she answered, catching the idea she had conveyed to me. "One after 'tother, I mean." And this time she laughed until the tears ran down her wrinkled face.

"Are you ready?" she asked, wiping her eyes with the skirt of her bonnet. "All rite. My oldest son is Daniel Doolittle Douglas Donnalson. Got that down? Next, William Wallace Winfield Washington. Next, Millard Mansfield Mayberry Middleton. Next, Franklin Freemont Fenno Falstaff. How many's that? Four? Then the next is Mary Mabel Maranatha Mignonette. Next, Selina Sigouney Sunflower Siddons. Then comes Katrina Kapitall Karenhappueh Kingston, and Tamar Talmadge Tuberose Templeton."

"How many gals does that make—four? Now the rest of the boys. Benjamin Beecher Bucephalus Breckenridge, Goliah Goldsmith Godfrey Grant, Charles Cameron Conkling Cutaway, Arthur Abraham Aristotle Allbright."

"Let's see," counting on her fingers. "Yes, that's right. Now we'll finish up the gals. Araminta Adelaide Armstrong Arlington, Henrietta Hermans Hugo Hathany, Jemima Jessemine Jezebel Judson, and my baby's name is Lucy Lavinia Lee Lynn Longfellow."

As I carefully folded the paper she was saying "Now you must soon—I've had a real nice time and enjoyed our conversation (?) fine. I live just two miles below here, on the old military road. No, no, I don't want no help 'bout getting on the critter—Good-by!" And she went out, springing down the steps as agile as a girl of sixteen.

When my husband returned, and I described my visitor, and produced the list of names, I could scarcely convince him that I was not testing his credulity.

AN OYSTER PARTY.

[Indianapolis Scissors.

Wilson's wife had given him a commission to execute, and although he was not the purchasing member of the firm, she thought she could trust him to get her some oysters for Sunday dinner.

"Now dear," she said, "you must, you must withdraw your mind from those stupid philosophical studies and don't let the oyster man get ahead of you, for he'll do it if he sees the chance. Now mind, I want three pints of bulk oysters."

"How d'ye sell the oysters?' said Wilson to the Teutonic fossil who was head clerk and proprietor of the oyster shop.

"Vorty cends by a kwart," replied the fossil.

"Gimme three pints, then."

The oysters were duly dumped into his tin pail, and a silver dollar handed over the counter in return. After considerable mental figuring, forty cents were handed back in change. Another mental calculation, this time on Wilson's part.

"How's this," he exclaimed, "I want 30 cents more."

"Ye-es, I pelief dots so," said the German, scratching his head in a puzzled way. "No; holt on. You got dree bints, ain't it?"

"Yes."

"Vell, dots vorty cents py a kwart, und dree bints is den sixty cents; ain't dot so?"

"Why, no, of course not," said Wilson. "There's four pints in a quart, ain't there? So three pints would only be thirty cents."

"Mine froind, you cand blay dot game on me. Ven I wend on der schule, der vos only dwo bints in a kwart."

"Why, you old fool," retorts Wilson, I can prove it by anybody. Here Brown, come in here a minute. How many pints are there in a quart?"

"Eight!" exclaimed Brown readily.

"Vots de metter mit you?" asked the vender. "Oh, Mr. Shonson, chust come auf de sthore vonce und dell de chentlemens how many bints vos in a kwart."

"There's six," exclaimed Johnson, "either six or four. I don't just remember which."

"Gott grashious!" exclaimed the exasperated fish monger. "You dinks a Dutchman va. a gee e. I glean de whole stkore mit you oud."

During the racket which followed, a policeman entered, and upon being told that the oyster man was trying to sell three pints of oysters for a quart and a half, he remarked that the new superintendent was down on all these cheatin' hucksters, and so marched the German off to the calaboose, and Wilson went home triumphantly and told his wife about the man who had tried to sell oysters two pints to the quart.

Born in Boston.

[Chicago Tribune.

"Does your father know me?"

Gaston de Murphy looks tenderly down at the Lady Agnes Riordan as these words, so full of solemn import, leave his ruby-red lips and float slowly out across the broad demesne that stretches away to the westward from the castle, and on which the cabbages are swaying gently to and fro in the soft, kissing wind that comes languidly up from the south, as if to leave its sunny home. And the girl, as they fall upon her pink-tinted ear, nestles closely to him in loving fashion, and, although her voice is firm when she answers him, there is a fear-haunted look in the dark-brown eyes that are gazing so steadily into his, and a slight trembling of the pretty white arm with its rounded curves and soft flesh-tint that is clinging to his own.

"I don't know," she says, "whether he knows you or not, and that is why I am so fearful—why my heart is always in the anxiety of a painful doubt. It is because I love you so dearly, Gaston," the girl continued—"because my love for you is the mad, unreasoning kind that would renounce parents, home, wealth, everything, for the one upon whom it is bestowed—that these doubts are ever haunting me, ever peeping with their wicked, leering faces from behind the black clouds of sorrow that fill all the horizon of my life—that life which should hold for me nothing but radiant joy and sweet content. And it is only when I think of your great love for me, and, better still, when I stand close pressed in your arms and feel your heart throbbing against mine, that I am happy, and then there seems to be no grief nor sorrow in all this wide, wide world, and the sky, so lately overcast with lowering clouds, seems like a shield of turquoise bloom hovering over the earth."

"She is a daisy from Daisyville," says Gaston softly to himself, "and can talk a man black in the face"—and then turning to the Lady Agnes he bends over tenderly and kisses the fair white face that is upturned to his. She passes her dimpled hand over his face in a fond, caressing way that shows how great is the love she bears him. And, then, when both are steeped in the incense of a grand and enduring passion, when all the world seems rose-tinted, there comes suddenly over the girl's face a wave of pallor and into her brown eyes a look of ghastly horror that is frightful in its intensity.

"My God!" she cries, "I hear it. There is no chance for a mistake."

"Hear what?" asks Gaston, his eyes aflame with excitement.

"The ancestral footstep," says the Lady Agnes, drawing still closer to her lover. "My father is coming!"

* * * * * *

Ten minutes have passed—hot, seething minutes that can never be recalled. The Lady Agnes bends over a form that lies prostrate on the ground at her feet. "Speak to me, papa!" she exclaims in agonizing accents—"only one little word to let me know that you are not dead!"

The man opens his eyes. "And so that is your lover, Constance?"

"Yes, papa."

"And are you sure he did not have brass knuckles or a club?"

"Yes, papa."

"Then how do you explain his terrible power—" and the duke of Galway pulled his nose into place as he spoke.

"He was," said the girl, in low, tremulous tones, "born in Boston."

"Just Like Mother."

[Peck's Sun.

The wind was blowing a regular gale, large snow-flakes were borne along, helpless in their lightness, and lodged here and there only to be again picked up by the wind and piled together in great drifts. It was bitter cold, and pedestrians hurried along the street, intent, seemingly, only to reach the fireside of home and family.

In a stairway on Wisconsin street a little ragged fellow, with a bundle of papers under his arm, had crawled out of the storm, but not out of the cold. Crouching in a heap upon the steps, teeth chattering, too cold to call out his papers for sale, he tried to get warm. His skeleton arms, his pinched features, told, only too plainly, that he was a child of misfortune. Poverty, thou wouldst not be so cruel, were it not that the world looks upon thee as a culprit, and to be in thy company a crime.

No one observed the little fellow as he sat there in the cold. Presently an old lady, warmly, but not richly clad, came along, and chanced to see him. She turned ito the stairway, but the boy, used, evidently, to cuffs and kicks, tried to escape her. A reassuring smile on her face and a kind word from her lips, held the lad. She, dear old soul, knelt down, pinned up his tatters, tied a scarf about his neck, gave him a piece of silver, and with parting words of cheer started to leave him. Turning again, she clasped the boy to her bosom, kissed him, and then went on her way. The boy, with tears on his cheeks, looked after her, as she passed down Wisconsin street, and said: "That is just the way mother used to kiss me before she died. I wonder if it is her again." Then, as if a new impulse and a new life had been born in him, the little newsboy started to dispose of his stock in trade. That act of kindness, that kiss, so much like mother's, in charity given, so warmed his heart that the cold winds of winter had no terrors for him. And who knows but what that old lady's kindness to that ragged, forlorn news boy will be the turning point in that boy's life that will, in the future, give to the world a man of honor, and a man of whom Milwaukee may well be proud.

There are hundreds of boys all over this great country who are going to the bad just for the want of a kind word or act, like that given by this kind-hearted old German woman. Kind words and acts, with a few dimes, will do much to reform the world, and reclaim those who are, by force of circumstances, going to the wrong.

A Giant President.

[Hayti Correspondence Chicago Herald.]

The other day I saw that most remarkable man, Louis E. Salomon, the president of the black republic. He is a massive, broad-shouldered giant, at least six feet six inches in height, with the physical proportions of a gladiator, a profile dark as the "night's plutonian shore," with snow-white locks, keen, restless eyes, glittering like diamonds in a setting of jet, high, intellectual forehead, and a form, despite his advanced age, erect as a pillar of stone, with a dignified air. He was accompanied by a numerous retinue of ebony aides-de-camp, resplendent in military trappings of fanciful designs and colors, decorated with numerous medals won in imaginary battles, and a profusion of gold lace and brass trimmings that dazzle the plebeian lookers-on. A noticeable fact was that the entire group of warriors responded to the title of general. There seems to be no minor rank in the forces of the republic. Under the present regime a private citizen cannot hold any lands in his own right, and here is the dulcet harp upon which Salomon has played with such cunning. He has promised the poorer classes a division of the public lands, the establishment of free schools, national banks, railroads, etc., all of which he is utterly powerless to fill. Professing to affect extreme republican simplicity, yet his every action smacks of royalty, his official documents being promulgated from an antiquated structure yclept the "National Palace," and signed in kingly form, "Salomon." His proclamations are invariably written in the French language and remind any one of the famous manifesto of Plon Plon on the walls of Paris. Educated at one of the most famous colleges in Paris, Salomon is a person of no ordinary ability, being a brilliant conversationalist and linguist, and a crafty diplomat. Totally indifferent to the welfare of his people, he has by plausible misrepresentions succeeded in becoming the most popular personage in his party. Still, in view of the inevitable collapse which he is shrewd enough to foresee, he has "feathered his own nest" with a princely bank account in Kingston, Jamaica, and purchased several properties on neighboring islands. Among the many banished persons it is worthy of notice that not one of them has a black face. They are invariably mulattos or of other shades popularly designated as "off color." Salomon married a French lady some two years ago whom he had met in Paris, and the nuptials were performed here. This matrimonial venture threatened at one time to overthrow his popularity, the natives accusing him of attempting to give the country over to the whites, for it is useless to disguise the fact that they are extremely jealous of the Caucasian, or any but their own color.

A Little Gem.

[Chicago Sun.

A handsome woman without sense is very much like a beautiful flower without perfume. Both are pleasing to the eye; beyond that they are of little value. A sprig of mignonette or a modest little violet are treasured much more than the brilliant dahlia or stately camelia, and yet the latter are more gorgeous.

A PROFESSIONAL MERRY ANDREW.

[London World.]

"Are clowns born clowns, or do they gradually turn clowns as they grow up?" This was a problem propounded by Dickens in his "Life of Grimaldi." One thing is certain, that Mr. Harry Payne, "the last of the clowns," as he has aptly been called, was born a harlequin, although his father, "Old Billy," or as he used to be styled on the programmes Mr. W. H. Payne, was a clown before him. Harry is very proud of his father, who died five years ago. He played clown both at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and much of the business still retained in the "comic scenes" was of his invention. It is not only on the stage that Harry Payne is popular among children. Though a single man, a nursery is to him an "earthly paradise." He is never so happy as when romping with a party of boys and girls, and it would be difficult to find his equal as a tranquilizer of babies. Every morning he is besieged at Camden-town by children on their way to school, who know that somewhere mixed up in his clothes are stores of sweetmeats, or surprises in the shape of toys. When he distributes the crackers from the stage each evening he always saves two, and carries them home for a little girl and boy who are special favorites. In consequence of continually playing to children he has acquired a sympathy with child-nature. Children are his only audience. When arranging his business their amusement is his only thought. What matter if the jokes be old? They are new to the children. He plays to them, and not to the old blase playgoers and dilettante critics. He takes his line as a clown from Tom Matthews, and these two have much in common. If you watch Harry Payne's clowning you will remark the absence of mere senseless horse play. His clown is a mirthful buffoon, not a vulgar street rough. All his pranks have some meaning, every piece of business is carefully thought out and rehearsed beforehand. Harry Payne arranges all his harlequinades while lying in bed. On the walls of the room hang a number of pictures by Charles Lyall, representing scenes in the pantomimes produced at Covent Garden by the Payne and Harrison company. There is also an excellent likeness of Grimaldi, and several reminiscences of plays and players. By the bedside he keeps a note-book and pencil. When a new idea strikes him he immediately makes a note of it, and he works out the details of a scene before he attempts it on the stage. The arrangement of the whole harlequinade is left to the clown. He has to teach his associates their business, drill the boys, and put the policeman through his facings. In the "Drury Lane Annual," last year, Mr. Payne told a most characteristic story concerning one of the little fellows whom he trained for some business in one of his pantomimes. No prettier tale appeared last Christmas than that which related how young Joe Packer fell down a trap a week before boxing night and broke a limb, and how his little sister dressed in his clothes begged to play his part. Harry found she knew all about it, for the pair had rehearsed it together at home. Let us finish the story in his own words: "She was a great success the first night. Although the audience called for her after her song she did not come back, but sat in the wings crying. She won a complete triumph for her brother, whose name was printed in the programme and in all the papers, although he did not appear once in the run of the pantomime. On the strength of those notices I dare say he got his foot on the ladder of fame, up which he has climbed pretty high by this time, for he is now a popular actor and a favorite with the public. As for his sister, her first and last appearance upon the stage, I believe, is chronicled in this story—not a very wonderful story, perhaps, but as true as I am a sinner." He has a hold fund of such recollections, and, as if to illustrate the bent of his mind, they are mostly pathetic. Once at the Surrey theatre the harlequin slipped as he leapt through a clock-face, and his leg stuck in the scene. Harry, who was clown, thinking to cover the bad retreat by a laugh, took hold of the leg and cried to the audience as he shook it, "O there's a clumsy man!" The harlequin was pulled through, and the scene proceeded; but as he did not put in an appearance again, the clown inquired the cause of the prompter. "He has broken his leg," was the reply. It was the leg he had shaken. When he heard it Harry Payne fainted on the stage. Away from the foot-lights no one would suspect him of being a clown. He looks more like a thriving stockbroker than a professional Merry Andrew. He is well known, too, in the neighborhood of Capel-court, where he frequently seeks the advice of old city friends on the subject of safe investments; for unlike too many members of his profession, he is of a provident disposition, and prefers preparing for the proverbial rainy day to mortgaging an uncertain future for a reckless present. Formerly, when not playing in pantomimes, he used to travel in the provinces with the opera companies; he was also a stock Charles the Wrestler in "As You Like It." He is an inveterate sportsman. With the rod in hand he loves to wander among the Welsh mountains and throw for trout in shady streams. On moor and over stubble his gun has often helped to fill many a bag; but fishing is his favorite occupation. His friends have come upon him in all manner of places—on a pierhead in Cumberland, in a punt on a midland county pond, on the bank of some quiet reach of the Thames—playing his line with contented composure, and probably forgetful that boxing night was approaching, when he would be called on to play another line equally congenial. He is also much given to yachting, and in company with his brother-in-law—who owns one of the smartest little yachts afloat—he makes every summer an excursion round the coast.

The duke of Edinburgh, in addition to his other accomplishments, is winning renown for his taste in dress. As dictator of uniform regulations for the channel squadron he gives general satisfaction. His latest order is that tail-coats are never to be worn without epaulettes, that dress being reserved for balls and full-dress dinners; while for ordinary official dinners, or when present at a regimental mess, jackets, blue waistcoats and gold lace trousers are to be worn.—*Exchange.*